

Federalist versus Anti-Federalists Arguments over the Constitution

Federalist Arguments	Anti-Federalist Arguments
Wanted a strong national government	Wanted a weak national government
Believed an effective national government was essential to provide order and protect the rights of the people	Believed that a strong national government threatened the rights of the people and the powers of the states
Wanted a stronger national government than those in the Articles of Confederation. They saw the need to write a new constitution	Wanted power to remain with the local and state governments in order to maintain a government by the people
Created an independent executive and judiciary to share power with the legislative branch of the government	Feared the power of the executive and judiciary, trusted only the legislative branch controlled by the consent of the governed
Set terms of office longer than one year in order to provide a stable government	Saw longer terms of office as a dangerous attempt to seize and control the government
Believed a large republic was the best size for the nation to be able to protect individuals' rights and liberties	Believed a small republic was the best size for the nation to be able to protect an individuals' rights and liberties
Wanted a government capable of managing the nation's economic and financial policies and problems such as the large national debt	Believed that the states should control their own finances and they opposed any form of national taxation
Feared mob rule and anarchy if there was no strong central government	Feared a loss of liberty and a return to tyranny and corruption under the Constitution
Feared power in a government but sought to control it through federalism, separation of powers and checks and balances	They saw themselves as representing the ideals of the American Revolution and feared the power in a large and distant federal government
Claimed that a bill of rights was not needed because the new government's powers were limited by the Constitution	Demanded a bill of rights to be added to the Constitution to protect people against abuses of power by the federal government